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Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Programme on Knowledge Regarding Harmful Effects of Junk Food Among Adolescents at Selected Schools

Ms Ashwini K. Vaidya[1], Dr. Pratiksha Patrick[2]

[1]PhD Scholar (Nursing), Mansarovar Global University, Bhopal.
[2]Professor, S. S Institute of Nursing Sciences & Research Centre, Mansarovar Global University, Sehore Bhopal (MP).

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ABSTRACT

Junk foods are rich in calories, salt and fats. Excess consumption of junk foods leads rise to wide variety of health disorders. School canteens are offering foods high in fat and sugar which actually contributing to the youth weight gain along with other problems like infections, food poisonings and dental diseases. Consuming junk foods might stop the children from taking healthy meals either at school or at home. Improving nutrition knowledge among adolescents may help them to make healthier food choices.A Quasi-experimental study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of structured teaching program on knowledge regarding harmful effects of Junk food among adolescent. Study was conducted in selected schools. 60 adolescents those who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected.Non-probability convenience sampling technique was used. The pre-test was taken by using self-structured questionnaire followed by structured teaching programme. After 7 days post- test was taken. The mean percentage of the knowledge score of post-test (22.88) was higher than pre-test (12.96). The't' value for total pre-test and post-test was 16.76.The difference between pre-test knowledge score and post-test knowledge scores was 9.92. It means the knowledge score increased after structured teaching programme. The findings of study reveal that the education had a vital role in improving the knowledge of adolescents regarding harmful effects of Junk food.

INTRODUCTION

The world is currently facing an obesity epidemic, which puts people at risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes.Junk food can contribute to obesity and yet it is becoming a part of our everyday lives because of our fast-paced lifestyles. Life can be jam-packed when you are juggling school, sport, and hanging with friends and family! Junk food companies make food convenient, tasty, and affordable, so it has largely replaced preparing and eating healthy homemade meals. Junk foods include foods like burgers, fried chicken, and pizza from fast-food restaurants, as well as packaged foods like chips, biscuits, and ice-cream, sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, fatty meats like bacon, sugary cereals, and frozen ready meals like lasagne. These are typically highly processed food meaning several steps were involved in making the food, with a focus on making them tasty and thus easy to overeat. Unfortunately, junk foods provide lots of calories and energy, but little of the vital nutrients our bodies need to grow and be healthy, like proteins, vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Australian teenagers aged 14–18 years get more than 40% of their daily energy from these types of foods. Young people are often the targets of sneaky advertising tactics by junk food companies, which show our heroes and icons promoting junk foods. In Australia, cricket, one of our favourite sports, is sponsored by a big fast-food brand. Elite athletes like cricket players are not fuelling their bodies with fried chicken, burgers, and fries! A study showed that adolescents aged 12–17 years view over 14.4 million food advertisements in a single year on popular websites, with cakes, cookies, and ice cream being the most frequently advertised products.Another study examining YouTube videos popular amongst children reported that 38% of all ads involved a food or beverage and 56% of those food ads were for junk foods.

Need of Study

Adolescence is the only stage after infancy when the growth rate accelerates once again. This rapid growth spurt is accompanied by significant hormonal, cognitive, and emotional changes, making teenagers particularly vulnerable in terms of their nutritional needs. Due to their hectic schedules filled with after-school commitments and social activities, adolescents often skip meals or eat outside the home. Their diet frequently consists of fast foods like burgers, pizzas, hotdogs, and sugary drinks. However, these types of food provide little to no essential nutrients needed for the body's healthy functioning. Junk food is typically high in unhealthy fats and calories—much more than what the body requires daily—making teens more susceptible to heart-related issues. Studies have also linked junk food consumption to

behavioural problems. Many children and adolescents show symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which has been associated with additives and excessive sugar found in processed foods. Consuming just one 330 ml sugary beverage each day can lead to an estimated weight gain of over 0.45 kg (about one pound) per month. According to data from the National Sample Survey (NSS), Indians spend nearly 25% more on junk food items—such as processed foods, beverages, and snacks—than the Rs 33,000crorespent on edible oils.

As per data from the NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations), India has been ranked by states based on the percentage of overweight or obese individuals, with Punjab topping the list. Government surveys indicate that at least 16% of children and teenagers between the ages of 6 and 19 are classified as overweight, while around 11% of adolescents fall into the obese category.Based on the findings, it is essential for adolescents to understand the negative impact of junk food in order to manage potential health risks and enhance their overall well-being. Hence, this study aims to develop a structured teaching program to educate adolescents about the harmful effects of junk food. The goal is to raise awareness among teenagers, helping them make healthier choices and potentially prevent various serious health conditions.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the existing knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food among adolescents at selected school.
- To assess the effectiveness of structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding effects of junk food among adolescents at selected school.
- To find out the association between pre-test knowledge score regarding effects of junk food among adolescents with their selected demographic variables.

Hypothesis

- There is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores of adolescents on harmful effects of Junk food.
- There is a significant association between the pre-test knowledge score regarding harmful effects of junk food among adolescents with their selected demographic variables.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Independent variables: Structured teaching programme on knowledge regardingHarmful effects of Junk food.

Dependent variables: knowledge regarding harmful effects of Junk food among adolescents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Quantitative evaluative research approach was adopted for the study.quasi-experimental one group pre-test post-test research design was used. The samples of 60 adolescents on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected.Simple random sampling technique was used.The tool used for the study was the structured knowledge questionnaire consisting of section I- Socio- demographic variables such as Age, Sex, Education standard of adolescent, Residence, Family income and availability of Junk food in school canteen and section II -consisting of 30 items related to Knowledge regarding harmful effects of Junk food.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Related to Socio demographic variables of adolescents:

According to sample characteristics of adolescents the majority of adolescents 30 (50.00%) were in age group 15-16 years and males were more in number 31(51.67%).

The maximum adolescents (93.33%) belongs to rural area .According to educational standard of adolescent the maximum adolescents 18(30.00%) were from class 11th. The majority of adolescents 28 (46.67%) had family monthly income < 5000 and availability of Junk food in schools was 100%.

Table 1: General assessments of Knowledge – Pre-Test& post Test n==60

	Groups	Score	Pre-test		Post-Test	
			Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
Knowledge	Poor	0-10	47	78.33	0	0.00
	Average	11-20.	13	21.67	21	35.00
	Good	21-30	0	0.00	39	65.00
Knowledge	Minimum		8		17	
	Maximum		20		25	
	Average (SD)		12.78(2.82)		21.26(1.77	

At the time of pre-test assessment 78% of adolescents at selected colleges had poor knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food. 21 %students had average knowledge and no one had good knowledge. Average knowledge score at the time of pre-test was 12.78with standard deviation of 2.82.At the time of post-test assessment 65 % of adolescents had good knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food .35 % had average knowledge & no one had poor knowledge.

Related to impact of socio-demographic variables on the knowledge scores
Among socio- demographic variables only gender had association with knowledge mean scores

CONCLUSION

In this study pre-test knowledge mean scores of adolescents regarding harmful effects of Junk food were less than post-test knowledge mean scores. Structured teaching program helped to gain knowledge. All moved up that is from 0-15 to higher scores towards average and good scores. The study findings implied that the education has a vital role in improving the knowledge of adolescents regarding harmful effects of Junk food. So, it was concluded that by providing teaching program on harmful effects of Junk food, the knowledge of adolescents improved.

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